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ABSTRACT

This study investigated changes in outstanding teachers' concerns about teaching at four distinctly different career stages, based on F. Fuller's model of teacher development. Four samples totalling approximately 300 preservice and inservice teachers were administered the Teacher Concerns Questionnaire upon commencement of training or in early, mid, or late stages of their teaching careers. The outstanding preservice teachers had scored 24 or higher on the American College Test; the outstanding inservice teachers were Jennings Scholars. Statistical analysis revealed that the teachers reported significantly different levels of task, impact, and self concerns among the four career stages. Preservice teachers had lower task and higher self concerns than did inservice teachers. Inservice teachers were more concerned about impact upon pupils than were teachers commencing training. The three groups of inservice teachers with varied years of teaching experience differed significantly from one another only in the area of self concerns, where outstanding late career teachers were lower. (Contains 10 references.) (JDD)

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Outstanding Teachers' Concerns About Teaching at Four Stages of Career Development

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Abstract

This study was designed to investigate possible changes in outstanding teachers' concerns about teaching at four distinctly different career stages. Four samples totaling approximately 300 preservice and inservice teachers were administered the Teacher Concerns Questionnaire upon commencement of training or in early, mid, or late stages of their teaching careers. MANOVA procedures revealed that the outstanding teachers reported significantly different levels of task, impact, and self concerns between the four career stages. Higher teaching task concerns were reported between the teachers' inservice and preservice career stages. Higher impact upon pupil concerns were found at the teachers' early and mid inservice career stages compared to upon commencement of training, and higher self-survival as a teacher concerns were reported by the teachers upon commencement of training and during mid career than compared to late career. These differences in expressed concerns at different career points were discussed relative to consistency with the Fuller concerns model.

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Outstanding Teachers' Concerns About Teaching at Four Stages of Career Development

According to Fuller's model of teacher development, teachers pass through three phases of concerns about teaching as they mature as teachers (Fuller, 1969; Fuller & Bown, 1975). These three phases are characterized by teachers' concerns about self-survival as a teacher, the task of teaching, and their impact upon pupils. The concerns phases are viewed as being sequential and accumulative in their evolution. In each phase of teacher development all three types of concerns about teaching are felt by teachers, but the interaction between the preservice or inservice setting and the teachers' particular stage of career development is such that one of the types of concern demands the major focus of the teachers' attentions during each of the three phases of development.

During the early preservice teacher preparation period, the Fuller model describes prospective teachers as lacking concern about teaching, having little understanding of pupils, and being concerned for their own survival as students. The model then suggests that later preservice experiences result in the emergence of concerns about teaching with the central focus of the prospective teachers' attentions becoming self-survival as teachers. The nature of late preservice experiences results in increases in the prospective teachers' concerns about actually being able to perform the tasks of teaching. During the early inservice teaching years, self-survival concerns typically are successfully handled and the neophyte teachers' central focus becomes addressing their concerns about the tasks of actually teaching. Later in their inservice experiences the more mature teachers have successfully dealt with their early self-survival concerns and their concerns about the tasks of teaching sufficiently to begin addressing their concerns about having a meaningful and significant impact upon their pupils.

The Teacher Concerns Questionnaire (George, 1978) was developed to facilitate research on the Fuller theoretical framework. Initial research using this instrument has revealed partial support for the concerns theory. In several studies the hypothesized changes in prospective teachers' self concerns have been identified, but little or no change has been identified in prospective teachers' task and impact concerns during five-year preservice training programs (Adams, Hutchinson, & Martray, 1980; Adams and Martray, 1981; Sitter & Lanier, 1982).

In studies extending beyond the preservice training years, Adams (1982) identified changes in task and self concerns, but no changes in impact concerns were found in cross-sectional samples of first, third, and fifth-year teachers. He found that teachers' self-survival concerns decreased and teaching task concerns increased, but impact upon pupils concerns remained stable and highest at each of the teaching experience points. Similarly, Pigge and Marso (1987) and Marso and Pigge (1989) identified increases in task concerns and decreases in self concerns but no change in impact concerns for cross-sectional samples of teachers at different points in preservice training and inservice teaching. These latter researchers (Pigge & Marso, 1990) replicated their findings with a longitudinal sample of prospective teachers progressing through their preservice training.

Reeves and Kazelskis (1985) raised questions about the adequacy of the teacher samples selected for study in the investigations of teachers' concerns. They speculated that all teachers cannot be expected to pass through the concerns stages at the same time. They indicated that this varied rate of progress factor is particularly problematic in studies where inservice teachers are placed in a single group or into experience groups with modestly different years of experience. The averaging of teachers' concerns scores under these conditions might conceal the fact that some teachers had progressed to later stages. The main purpose of the present study was to select for study a sufficiently diverse sample of teachers to alleviate doubts, as expressed by Reeves and Kazelskis, about a lack of clear distinctions between the developmental stages of various groups of teachers reporting their concerns about teaching. More specifically, this study was designed to assess and compare the self, task, and impact concerns of cross-sectional samples of outstanding preservice or inservice teachers (e.g., teachers and prospective teachers who had experienced considerable success and who, therefore, should have most progressed through Fuller's hypothesized developmental phases) who were at distinctly diverse career stages (at the commencement of preservice teacher preparation and at early, mid, and late stages of their inservice careers).

Methods and Procedures

The cross-sectional samples selected for study consisted of 65 outstanding, academically talented, preservice teachers just commencing their teacher preparation the spring semester of 1991 and of approximately 225 outstanding inservice teachers of which 84 were in the relatively early stage of their teaching careers (5 to 19 years of teaching), 101 were in a middle stage of their teaching careers (20 to 29 years of teaching), and 35 were in a late stage of their teaching careers (30 plus years of teaching). The outstanding or academically talented preservice teachers were prospective teachers who had scored 24 or higher on the American College Test (ACT) and who were enrolled in their first required teacher education course. The outstanding inservice teachers, known as Jennings Scholars, were attending a reunion dinner and lecture during the spring of 1991. These Jennings Scholars previously had been selected as outstanding teachers from 130 school districts in 21 Northwest Ohio counties during the 1967/68 through the 1988/89 academic years. These outstanding teachers were honored by a year-long lecture series funded by the Jennings Foundation the academic year of their selection.

The Jennings Scholars Lecture Program is funded by the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation of Cleveland, Ohio. The Jennings Scholars are selected by their school superintendents with criteria established by the Jennings Scholars Superintendents Advisory Committee. These criteria in essence state that teacher scholar selection should be considered carefully by superintendents with the award not being viewed as a political plum but as a means of identifying and honoring their best and most competent K-12 classroom teachers.

A total of approximately 475 Jennings Scholars participated in the 1991 Northwestern Ohio reunion dinner and lecture. Approximately 70 other eligible Jennings Scholars had sent letters of regret due to other commitments. All active teachers, approximately 25 percent of the total group had retired from teaching, attending the reunion with from 5 to 19, 20 to 29, and 30 or more years of teaching experience were asked to complete the instruments for this

study. Approximately 225 of these teachers provided usable information for the study.

Both the preservice and inservice teacher subjects completed the Teacher Concerns Questionnaire (TCQ) in group settings. The preservice teachers completed the TCQ at required data gathering sessions during the second week of the spring term of 1991 as they were being organized into field experience groups for their first required teacher education course. The inservice teachers completed the TCQ during or following the Northwest Ohio Jennings Scholars 1991 reunion luncheon. The TCQ provides three concerns scores (self, task, and impact) derived from 15 items responded to on a continuum from not concerned '1' to extremely concerned '5'. George (1978) reported test-retest reliability for the concerns scales in the .70's and alpha internal consistency coefficients ranging from .67 to .83. He also provided construct validity evidence in the form of significant differences between preservice and inservice teachers' concerns for the self and task scales but not for the impact scale. Additionally, Rogan, Borich, and Taylor (1992) have provided similar further validation of the concerns scales.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) procedures were used to determine whether or not statistically significant mean differences existed between the cross-sectional samples of the outstanding teachers in the four stages of their careers (preservice and early, mid, and late inservice career) for the teachers' task, self, and impact concerns scores. A significant MANOVA 'F' value indicated that the groups differed on the three dependent variables. Appropriate univariate ANOVAs and subsequent post-hoc Scheffe tests were then used to ferret out pair-wise mean differences. Additionally, one-way ANOVA analyses were completed on each of the 15 individual concerns items to better identify the specific nature of the differences between the concerns of the teachers in the four career stages.

Findings

The analyses of the data gathered from the samples of teachers revealed statistically significant mean differences between the four career periods of the teachers for the task, self, and impact scores. The MANOVA 'F' value was 7.05, $p < .001$ (Wilk's) for the initial overall means test. The follow-up univariate F-tests revealed mean differences $p \leq .05$ in the reported levels of concerns about teaching between the four stages of teacher development for each of the three concerns scales.

As indicated by the means presented in Table 1, teachers in each of the four career stages reported higher levels of impact than self and task concerns. The preservice teachers reported higher levels of self than task concerns. In contrast, tne inservice teachers reported higher levels of task than self concerns in each of the three inservice career stages.

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Insert Table 1 about here
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The univariate F-tests revealed a significant mean difference between reported levels of teachers' concerns about the task of teaching somewhere among the four career stages ($F = 20.73$, $p < .001$). The Scheffe pair-wise mean

comparison tests ($p \leq .10$) revealed that mean differences were limited to differences between the preservice teachers' mean and the means of the three inservice teacher stages. The preservice teachers reported lower levels of concerns about the task of teaching ($\underline{M} = 11.97$) compared to the inservice teachers with 5 to 19 ($\underline{M} = 15.85$), 20 to 29 ($\underline{M} = 16.49$) and 30 plus ($\underline{M} = 15.71$) years of teaching experience. The three inservice teacher groups did not differ one from the other regarding task concerns.

The univariate tests also revealed that the teachers at various points in their careers reported significantly different levels of concerns about their impact upon pupils ($F = 5.71$, $p < .001$). These differences, as was the case with the differences identified between the task means, were limited to differences between the preservice mean and the three inservice means. The preservice teachers reported a lower level of impact concerns ($\underline{M} = 18.00$) than did the inservice teachers with 5 to 19 years of teaching ($\underline{M} = 20.15$) and the inservice teachers with 20 to 29 years of teaching experience ($\underline{M} = 20.44$). The mean for the group of teachers with most teaching experience did not differ from any of the other three means.

The teachers' concerns about their self-survival recorded at the four teacher career points differed between the most experienced teachers and two other teacher groups ($F = 3.73$, $p = .012$). The teachers with 30 or more years of teaching experience reported lower levels of self concerns ($\underline{M} = 12.29$) than did the preservice teachers ($\underline{M} = 15.26$) and the teachers with 20 to 29 years of teaching experience ($\underline{M} = 14.64$).

The one-way ANOVAs completed on the individual concerns scale items revealed statistically significant mean differences between the four career stages of teachers for 11 of the 15 scale items. The Scheffe ($p \leq .10$) pair-wise mean comparisons indicated that all identified individual item mean differences were between the preservice teachers and one or more of the groups of inservice teachers. In other words, these analyses failed to reveal any statistically significant item mean differences between the inservice teacher groups with 5 to 19, 20 to 29, and 30 or more years of teaching experience. The preservice teachers reported lower levels of concern than did the inservice teachers for 9 of these 11 scale items. Just for two items (both self scale items), doing well when a superior is present and getting a favorable evaluation of my teaching, did the preservice teachers report statistically significant higher levels of concerns than did the inservice teachers. The data related to the concerns scale item analyses are reported in Table 2.

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Insert Table 2 about here
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The four items related to concerns about lack of instructional materials (task), feeling adequate as a teacher (self), being accepted and respected by professional persons (self), and maintaining the appropriate degree of class control (task) did not reveal significant differences among the four groups of teachers and these were omitted from Table 2. The preservice teachers generally reported significantly less concern than the inservice teachers about feeling under pressure, meeting the needs of different students, too many noninstructional duties, diagnosing learning problems, motivating students, having too many students, guiding student growth, getting favorable evaluations,

inflexibility of teaching settings, and about whether each student gets what he/she needs.

Summary and Discussion

Significant differences in concerns about teaching were identified between the four groups of outstanding preservice or inservice teachers who were in distinctly different stages in their teaching careers. The outstanding prospective teachers just beginning their teacher training generally reported lower levels of concern about the task of teaching and about their impact upon pupils but higher levels of concern about their survival as teachers than did one or more of the groups of inservice teachers. Only for one comparison did the three groups of inservice teachers with varied years of teaching experience differ significantly one from the other in the levels of their concerns about teaching. The late career teachers reported lower self concerns than the mid career teachers.

The findings of lower task and higher self concerns for the preservice compared to inservice teachers appear to be consistent with Fuller's teacher concerns model. The lower levels of self concerns reported by those outstanding teachers who were near the end of their teaching careers compared to those in mid career also would appear to support the Fuller model; however, these outstanding teachers did not report significant reductions in teaching task and impact concerns at later as compared to earlier points in their teaching career as suggested by the Fuller model. Also, this study, like those referenced to previously, failed to identify differences between the early, mid, and late career teachers' levels of concerns about their impact upon pupils as predicted by the Fuller model. This model suggests that after teachers' task and self concerns are dealt with successfully, they should begin to address concerns about their impact upon pupil concerns. In the present study the teachers' late career impact scores were somewhat lower but not statistically significant.

It appears from the present study that outstanding teachers' concerns about the task of teaching are relatively low upon the outset of preservice education but increase in early inservice years and remain moderately high and relatively constant during the remainder of teachers' careers, that outstanding teachers' concerns about self-survival are moderately high upon the commencement of preservice education but decrease to become the lowest type of concerns later in their careers, and that teachers' impact concerns are highest of the three types of concerns at all career points and increase from preservice to inservice teaching but then remain high and relatively constant throughout their teaching careers. Most changes in the levels of these outstanding teachers' concerns were found between the preservice and inservice career stages; this phenomena was noted in previously reported (e.g., Marso & Pigge, 1989) studies of cross-sectional samples of teachers.

The inservice teachers in the present study, although not randomly selected nor likely typical of all teachers across the nation, had been identified as outstanding teachers prior to the present study and were at distinctly different stages in their teaching careers. It was assumed that this grouping of teachers by divergent teaching experience would most likely reveal developmental stage differences, if any existed, in accord with the Fuller model of teachers' concerns evolution and would alleviate Reeves and Kazelskis' (1985) criticism of previously studied samples of teachers not being at distinctly different stages

in their careers. Nevertheless, few significant differences were noted among the measured concerns of these more and less experienced outstanding teachers; therefore, these findings failed to provide support for the Fuller model beyond that already available in the existing research literature. In particular, this design failed to reveal a significant changes in inservice teachers' impact concerns which has been the most common limitation of the previously identified studies of the Fuller model. Whether this failure was due to these researchers' fallacious reasoning related to the nature of the development of the concerns of outstanding teachers (An informal review of the scores from other inservice teacher samples from previous studies suggests that these outstanding teachers did report lower self concerns and higher impact concerns as might be expected.), to inadequacies of the Fuller model, to sampling or other design limitations in the present study, or to still other unidentified factors remains to be determined.

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Table 1

Task, Self, and Impact Concerns Scale Means at Four Stages in Teachers' Career Development

	Scale Means at Four Career Stages					
Scale	Preserv.	5-19 yrs.	20-29 yrs.	30+ yrs.	F	p
(N)	(65)	(84)	(101)	(35)		
Task	11.97	15.85	16.49	15.71	20.73	.001
	A*	B	B	B		
Impact	18.00	20.15	20.44	19.29	5.71	.001
	A	B	B	A,B		
Self	15.26	13.92	14.64	12.29	3.73	.012
	A	A,B	A	B		

*Means coded with a same letter do not differ significantly (Scheffe post-hoc tests $p \leq .10$).

Table 2

Concern Scale Items Revealing Significant Mean Differences Between the Four Stages in Teachers' Careers

	Item Means at Four Career Stages						
(Scale)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)			
Concern	Preserv.	5-19 yrs.	20-29 yrs.	30+ yrs.	F	p	Scheffe*
(Self) Doing well when a superior is present.							
	2.86	2.48	2.50	2.03	4.62	.004	1 > 4
(Self) Getting a favorable evaluation of my teaching.							
	3.02	2.63	2.84	2.33	3.07	.029	1 > 4
(Task) Feeling under pressure too much of the time.							
	2.51	3.65	3.57	3.35	13.70	.001	1 < 2 & 3
(Task) Too many noninstructional duties.							
	2.05	3.57	3.68	3.77	33.67	.001	1 < 2, 3 & 4
(Task) Working with too many students each day.							
	2.40	3.33	3.34	2.91	8.64	.001	1 < 2 & 3
(Task) The routine and inflexibility of the teaching situation.							
	2.34	2.73	3.05	3.03	4.53	.005	1 < 3
(Impact) Meeting the needs of different kinds of students.							
	3.77	4.19	4.15	4.03	3.43	.018	1 < 2 & 3
(Impact) Diagnosing student learning problems.							
	3.15	3.77	3.69	3.94	4.81	.003	1 < 2, 3 & 4
(Impact) Challenging unmotivated students.							
	3.72	4.18	4.21	3.82	5.45	.002	1 < 2 & 3
(Impact) Guiding students toward intellectual and emotional growth.							
	3.65	4.02	4.20	3.86	5.16	.002	1 < 3
(Impact) Whether each student is getting what he/she needs.							
	3.71	4.13	4.23	3.97	5.60	.001	1 < 2 & 3

*Scheffe post-hoc test differences $p \leq .10$.